

# frontdoors

your key to the community

## magazine

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## A Fresh PERSPECTIVE

Fry's Food Stores  
president Monica Garnes  
talks about hunger, food  
waste and being a leader  
in a tumultuous year



ZERO  
HUNGER  
ZERO  
WASTE

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS + AUNT RITA'S + JEWISH FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICE



# A DAY WITH GAIL BAER

Vice president of  
philanthropic services  
at Jewish Family +  
Children's Service

As told to | Julie Coleman



### 5 a.m. >> FAMILY FIRST TO START THE DAY

I'm an early bird and have been ever since I was a kid. I work out in the morning, either a run or some kind of strength training at home. When it's light out, my husband and I walk our dog, Odie. I also take time to go through my personal email and call my parents, who live in Bethesda, Maryland, to catch up.

### 8 a.m. >> A PLAN OF ATTACK ... FOR GOOD

My day consists of a lot of meetings and working on many projects. As my day begins, I organize what I want to accomplish and the donors I want to contact. If something is difficult or complex, I want to get a good handle on that earlier in the day. In my role, I'm in charge of fundraising and marketing for the entire agency. This means being accountable and communicating well with a diverse donor pool and the 40,000 individuals we serve every year.

### 10 a.m. >> BRIGHT SPOTS + SILVER LININGS

We are beginning to plan our annual Brighter Tomorrow Luncheon, scheduled for Jan. 29, 2021. This event will look different because we are conducting it virtually, which we've never done before. In our meeting, we discuss online content for videos that highlight JFCS's response to COVID and how that affected our community. From the very beginning, JFCS was well-positioned to respond quickly because we address situations with vulnerable populations, and our infrastructure already had the flexibility to convert from in-person services to mostly virtual with little transition time. One of the silver linings of this new event format is that the hotel ballroom's capacity no longer limits attendance, and there is no cost for an individual to join us. So, with a virtual event, there are some wonderful ways we can reach out that we never took advantage of before.



Studies show that animal-assisted therapy helps lower cortisol levels in the brain, reduces blood pressure and heart rate, eases anxiety, and increases endorphins and oxytocin. JFCS employs therapists, clinicians, psychiatrists and nurse practitioners who serve more than 12,000 people across the Valley every year.



## 2 p.m. >> STAYING THE COURSE

I'm talking to a potential donor regarding a gift for the \$600,000 expansion of our West Valley clinic to include primary medical care. JFCS is still moving forward with this project that we had on the calendar. We're doubling the current space's footprint, adding medical and lab equipment, creating larger spaces for patient rooms and play therapy, and separate waiting areas for sick individuals. This is the fourth center where we have integrated behavioral health and primary medical care.

Each year, JFCS hosts an eight-month professional leadership program. This volunteer opportunity brings together philanthropically-minded professionals from the metro-Phoenix community that have a passion for social service.



## 4:30 p.m. >> PARTNERSHIP WITH A SPARK

We are working on a few projects with the Hillel Jewish Student Center at Arizona State University. They're providing tech-savvy volunteers to help our clients get comfortable with the platforms they're using, particularly our older adult creative aging classes, Memory Cafes, and supporting our behavioral health clients. We're also discussing a partnership where JFCS provides Safe Talk Training, which teaches individuals to be a suicide alert helper who looks for signs, knows what to do, and who to contact for professional help.

## 6:30 p.m. >> FILLING HEART + BODY

After work, I love to cook dinner. I love, love, love to cook using vegetables from the garden in our backyard! It's fun and relaxing, and a way for me to create and control. One thing I've realized is that, despite my husband and I being empty nesters for five years, I have not mastered quantity adjustments and still cook for five people. While I cook dinner, I FaceTime with my three kids, who live in Chicago, San Francisco and Seattle. After dinner, I like to watch "PBS NewsHour" with Judy Woodruff and "The Crown."

To learn more, go to [jfcsaz.org](http://jfcsaz.org).

Julie Coleman | CONTRIBUTING WRITER





## 11 a.m. >> ACCELERATING CHANGE

At the start of the pandemic, we quickly ramped up to make sure our clients got the care they needed, regardless of where they were or their family's circumstances. This meant accelerating our telehealth program, which was in our strategic plan to equip the entire agency with by 2022. This involved a lot of planning and investment in infrastructures, such as licenses and connections. We had to raise significant money for upfront and recurring costs, and two major donors helped us move this forward very quickly. One of the other bright spots we're seeing is that because of offering telehealth so widely at JFCS, the percentage of kept appointments has increased by 20 percent. This is wonderful because it means we can reach more people and remove barriers to care, such as childcare and transportation. Any significant issue that prevents someone from keeping their mental health or primary care appointment is now solved.

**An active lifestyle promotes a healthy mind and body. That's why JFCS hosts a variety of senior programs, including storytelling workshops (below) and belly dancing lessons (right). Note: These photos were taken prior to social distancing guidelines.**



## 1 p.m. >> SEEING + HEARING = CONNECTING

My role's primary focus is to interface with donors, and what's been challenging is that we've had to figure out different ways to communicate and get our message across. There's an art and science to this in a normal environment; the art and science to that interface in a pandemic is even more complicated. An advantage is that most everyone is at home, so people are much easier to reach. I typically have one or two Zoom meetings a day with donors, and there's also a lot of phone calls. Phone calls now last much longer, which fills me up because we're all missing and desiring that human connection. The gold nugget in this job is that you develop so many personal relationships and friends. This fills my glass half-full versus half-empty.

